A Message from Ellen Oh

We Need Diverse Books CEO and President

In 2019, We Need Diverse Books celebrated its fifth birthday — and what a wonderful five years it has been!

Since our start as a rallying cry on social media, WNDB has grown from a grassroots movement into a groundbreaking 501(c)3 nonprofit, with a dedicated board and team who strive to increase diversity in publishing.

We have accomplished so much this year, from celebrating the publication of our young adult anthology, *Fresh Ink*, to awarding another round of Internship Grants, to embarking on a new partnership with Penguin Random House to expand their Creative Writing Awards nationwide. We also gave away thousands of books, following through on our goal to provide diverse titles by diverse creators to kids across the country.

Our initiatives speak to what everyone at WNDB champions every day, programming that speaks to the heart of our purpose—to help make diversity in publishing an everyday reality.

All of this progress would not have been possible without the generous support of our donors. On the following pages, you can read more about what we have accomplished this fiscal year, and what we aim to achieve in the years to come. WNDB has achieved tangible change within the publishing industry thanks to you, and we're not done yet. We ask for your continued support so that one day, every child will see themselves in the pages of a book.

Ellen Oh, CEO & President
What We Do

**We Need Diverse Books** is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that seeks to create a world in which all children can find themselves in the pages of a book. We run a gamut of exciting initiatives that advocate for essential changes in the publishing industry to reflect and honor the lives of all young people.

**How we define diversity:** We recognize all diverse experiences, including but not limited to LGBTQIA+, people of color, gender diversity, people with disabilities, and ethnic, cultural and religious minorities.

**How we’re organized:** We are governed by a three-member Executive Board. Our part-time staff includes an executive director, program director, and four contractors who help oversee our programming and social media. In 2019 we hired a communications manager to grow our presence and to further spread the word about WNDB’s goals. We also have a team of dedicated volunteers who help run certain initiatives.
Our Team

2018-2019 Board
Ellen Oh (CEO and President)
Dhonielle Clayton (COO)
Judy Schricker (CFO)

Our partners

Team members:
Nicole Johnson (Executive Director)
Caroline Richmond (Program Director)
Christine Vallas (Accounts Manager)
Alaina Lavoie (Communications Manager)
JoAnn Yao (Social Media Manager)
Elissa Petrucci (Program Manager)

Key Volunteers:
Meg Cannistra and Miranda Paul
(Mentorship)
Terry Hong and Kathie Weinberg
(Walter Awards)
Jennifer Mann and Linda Sue Park
(Internships)
Marietta Zacker (Walter Grants)
Sandie Chen and Alex Gino (Panels)
Total income Fiscal Year July 2018 to June 2019: $455,800

- **Foundation Grants** $186,324
- **Major Donors** (above $2000) $181,739
- **Individual Donors** (below $2000) $87,737

* This number includes anthology advances and royalties.

** The financials presented in this annual report is for fiscal year July 2018 to June 2019. We converted from calendar year to fiscal year to align with our tax, audit and operating budgets. From FY2018 to FY2019, our general operating budget increased by $131,415 due to the expansion of several programs and functions and in conjunction with decreased spending in others. The Walter Award budget increased by $11,000 to accommodate a larger venue and event logistics. The WNDB in the Classroom budget increased by $22,000 as we donated more books. Our Mentorship program increased in effort and we were working on our new anthology, A Universe of Wishes. Finally, the General and Administrative fees increased as we hired a dedicated Executive Director in July of 2018.

** General and Administrative** $76,945
- Outreach and Advocacy $81,611
- In the Classroom $58,983
- Awards (Walter Awards, Walter Grants, Internship Grants) $94,992
- Anthology $48,195
- Mentorships $7,150
- Other Programs/Fundraising $5,411

** Carry forward of funds or Fiscal Year 2020 to ensure continuing services and to fund programs** - $376,477

* Administrative fees include: Program management, insurance, legal and accountancy fees.
The Walter Award

The Walter Dean Myers Award for Outstanding Children’s Literature, also known as “The Walter,” honors the legacy of celebrated children’s author and diversity advocate Walter Dean Myers (1937-2014).

Leaders: Terry Hong and Kathie Weinberg, Co-Directors

What we did this year: The Walter Award judging committee announced the winners and honorees of the 2019 cycle.

Winners
• Elizabeth Acevedo for The Poet X (Teen Category)
• Jewell Parker Rhodes for Ghost Boys (Younger Readers Category)

Honorees
• Tiffany D. Jackson for Monday’s Not Coming (Teen Category)
• Emily X.R. Pan for The Astonishing Color of After (Teen Category)
• David Bowles for They Call Me Güero: A Border Kid’s Poems (Younger Readers category)
• Veera Hiranandani for The Night Diary (Younger Readers Category)

The Walter Awards Ceremony was held on Friday, March 29, 2019, in the Thomas Jefferson Building of the Library of Congress. Newbery Medalist and bestselling author Linda Sue Park served as the Ceremony’s emcee. Christopher Myers, the son of the late Walter Dean Myers, also served as a guest speaker.
The Walter Award

The Ceremony was preceded by a symposium on diversity in children’s literature, co-hosted by the Library of Congress. The symposium, titled “On Writing, Voice, and Courage: A Conversation with Walter Honorees,” was moderated by Newbery Award-winning author Meg Medina and featured the 2019 Walter honorees.

WNDB will donate a minimum of 2,000 copies each of the winning books to schools, libraries, and other educational organizations.

What’s coming next year: In early 2020, the Walter Award judging committee announced the winners of the next Walter Awards. The winners include Mariko Tamaki and Rosemary O’Connell-Valero for the graphic novel Laura Dean Keeps Breaking Up With Me (Teen category) and Padma Venkatraman for The Bridge Home (Younger Readers category).

For more details about the Walter Award, contact Terry Hong and Kathie Weinberg at walteraward@diversebooks.org.
WNDB in the Classroom

WNDB in the Classroom provides free diverse books to low-income schools across the United States. By helping children find stories and authors that they can relate to, we encourage in them a lifelong love of reading.

Leader: Caroline Richmond

What we did this year: In the spring of 2019, we selected over 130 schools to receive classroom sets of our 2018 Walter Award winners, Long Way Down by Jason Reynolds and Schomburg: The Man Who Built a Library by Carole Boston Weatherford and Eric Velasquez. Due to a generous donation from Penguin Random House, we were also able to distribute 2,400 copies of their diverse children's books to 80 classrooms nationwide.

What’s coming next year: We have numerous book giveaways coming up, including donating 4,000 copies of our 2019 Walter Award winners, The Poet X by Elizabeth Acevedo and Ghost Boys by Jewell Parker Rhodes.

For information about WNDB in the Classroom, contact elissapetruzzi@diversebooks.org.
Anthologies

Our anthologies provide a school-friendly sampler of short stories that can easily be incorporated into educational curricula. Long term, we hope that these anthologies will be made available to as many low-income schools as possible.

Leader: Ellen Oh

What we did this year: Our new young adult anthology Fresh Ink was published on August 14, 2018. Edited by WNDB team member Lamar Giles, this compilation of short stories received three starred trade reviews and features stories by Jason Reynolds, Nicola Yoon, and Gene Luen Yang. Kirkus described the book as ‘a valuable addition to all middle and high school classrooms.’ With each anthology, WNDB hosts a short-story contest for a spot in the book by an unpublished diverse author. Muslim-American writer Aminah Mae Safi won the contest for Fresh Ink with her story, “Be Cool, For Once.”

What we can look forward to in 2018 and beyond: We’re excited to launch our next middle grade anthology, The Hero Next Door. Contributors will include RJ Palacio and Rita Williams-Garcia, and will be edited by WNDB former board member Olugbemisola Rhudy-Perkovich.

For more information about our anthologies, please contact Caroline Richmond carolinerichmond@diversebooks.org.
Internship Grants

Our Internships program, initiated in 2014, provides supplemental grants of up to $2,500 to interns from diverse backgrounds working at publishing houses and literary agencies.

**Leaders:** Advisory Board Chair Linda Sue Park and Jennifer Mann

**What we did this year:** We awarded eight grants in the summer of 2018, and the recipients worked at publishing houses like Scholastic, Lee & Low, and Simon & Schuster. Historically, 64% of our prior interns have found full-time work in the publishing industry.

**What to look forward to next year:** We will provide 11 grants to publishing interns in the summer of 2019. We also plan on hiring a dedicated program manager to help oversee the initiative moving forward.

For more details about the internship initiative, please contact Chelsea Villareal: chelseavillareal@diversebooks.org.
Mentorships

Our Mentorships program connects emerging writers and illustrators with seasoned authors and artists who offer professional guidance on craft and publishing, over the course of a calendar year. These Mentorships cover multiple categories within children’s literature – picture book, middle grade, young adult, and illustration.

Leader: Miranda Paul and Meg Cannistra

What we did this year: We oversaw the mentorships of 11 writers and/or illustrators in the 2018 calendar year and then launched 11 more in 2019. Our 2018 mentee, Jenn Kocsmiersky, illustrated the picture book *Paul and His Ukelele*, which was published by Ripple Grove Press.

What’s coming next year: Looking ahead to 2020, we will award 10 new mentorships to a new class of promising writers and illustrators.

For more details about the mentorship initiative, contact Miranda Paul: mirandapaul@diversebooks.org.
We Need Diverse Books began partnering with Penguin Random House in 2019 on their Creative Writing Awards (CWAs). The CWAs are a scholarship program designed to encourage the next generation of writers by recognizing their work and amplifying their diverse stories. Five $10,000 awards are given out in the following categories: Maya Angelou Award for Spoken Word Poetry, Poetry, Fiction/Drama, Personal Essay/Memoir, and one additional award of $10,000 to a student from the NYC-area.

Leader: Elissa Petruzzi

What we did this year: More than 600 high school seniors entered the 2019 competition, which was open to graduating seniors from public high schools nationwide for the first time, expanding the award’s original New York City scope. Students from more than 30 states and 250 high schools applied, representing all regions of the country.

The winners attended a day-long celebration at Penguin Random House headquarters in New York City, taking part in professional development workshops and an afternoon awards ceremony.
What we can expect in 2020: We will expand the number of applications for the Creative Writing Awards, further promote the winners’ work, and begin developing educational resources to help potential applicants hone their writing submissions.

For more information on the Creative Writing Awards, contact Elissa Petruzzi at elissapetruzzi@diversebooks.org.
We Need Diverse Books needs your help to continue and further our mission! With your donation, WNDB will be able to:

- **Support diverse authors and illustrators** through our Walter Awards and Walter Grants.
- **Diversify our classrooms** via WNDB in the Classroom.
- **Promote diversity in publishing** through the WNDB Internship Grants.
- **Provide mentorships to promising writers and artists** with our WNDB Mentorship Program.
- **Promote diverse programming** via WNDB-organized panels at conferences and festivals across the country.

**How can I send my donation to WNDB?**

If you wish to give a gift by check, please make it out to We Need Diverse Books and send it to:

**We Need Diverse Books**  
10319 Westlake Drive #104  
Bethesda, MD 20817

If you wish to make a donation online, you can contribute via [WNDB’s website](https://www.diversebooks.org). If you wish to make a sustaining (annual) donation or include WNDB in your Planned Giving, please contact Caroline Richmond at [carolinerichmond@diversebooks.org](mailto:carolinerichmond@diversebooks.org).
Are there other ways to support WNDB?

When you are shopping on Amazon and other e-vendor sites, you can direct some of your purchase to WNDB!

- **Amazon Smile** donates 0.5% of your purchase price to the nonprofit of your choice, at no extra cost to you. The first time you visit Amazon’s homepage via smile.amazon.com, you can log into your regular Amazon account and search for “We Need Diverse Books” when prompted to choose your charity. Then, as long as you shop through smile.amazon.com, whatever you buy helps WNDB move closer to our goals.

- **iGive** is a website that functions as a portal to many e-commerce sites you’re likely already shopping on. Once you have an account, you can install a browser button and then choose WNDB as your charity of choice. iGive will direct some of your purchase price to our organization at no extra cost for you.

**Corporate Matching**

Did you know most companies will match employees’ charitable contributions? A great way to increase the amount of your gift is to find out if the company you work for will match your donation. Most companies will match dollar-for-dollar, while some even double or triple your gift. Ask your human resources department to find out if your company matches gifts for 501(c)(3) organizations!